

In the Claims:

1 1. (currently amended) A lubricant dosing apparatus for  
2 injecting a dosed amount of a lubricant into a pressurized  
3 airflow, comprising:

4 a lubricant container adapted to contain a lubricant  
5 therein;

6 a pneumatically actuatable lubricant pump having a  
7 pump inlet connected to said lubricant container and having  
8 a pump outlet;

9 an injection channel connected to said pump outlet;

10 a non-return valve that is interposed between said  
11 pump outlet and said injection channel and that is adapted  
12 to close said pump outlet and to selectively temporarily  
13 open said pump outlet responsive to a pressure of the  
14 lubricant to allow the lubricant to flow from said pump  
15 outlet to said injection channel; and

16 an electronic sensor that is arranged adjacent to said  
17 non-return valve so as to sense at least one of a position  
18 and a stroke travel of said non-return valve, and that is  
19 adapted to emit an electrical signal responsive to and  
20 indicative of said position or said stroke ~~travel~~ travel;

21 wherein:

22 said non-return valve comprises a valve head that  
23 selectively covers and uncovers said pump outlet, a  
24 protruding valve plug that protrudes from said valve head  
25 and that selectively plugs into and unplugs from said pump

26 outlet, and a valve stem that extends from said valve head  
27 toward said electronic sensor;

28 an axial length of said valve plug protruding from  
29 said valve head determines a minimum required magnitude of  
30 said stroke travel of said non-return valve for opening  
31 said pump outlet; and

32 said electronic sensor senses said at least one of  
33 said position and said stroke travel of said valve stem of  
34 said non-return valve.

1 2. (original) The lubricant dosing apparatus according to  
2 claim 1, wherein said sensor comprises an inductive  
3 proximity sensor.

1 3. (original) The lubricant dosing apparatus according to  
2 claim 1, wherein said sensor comprises a capacitive  
3 proximity sensor.

Claim 4 (canceled).

1 5. (original) The lubricant dosing apparatus according to  
2 claim 1, further comprising a removable and exchangeable  
3 annular spacer disk that is arranged circumferentially  
4 around said non-return valve, and that has a thickness  
5 which determines a basic spacing distance between said  
6 electronic sensor and said non-return valve.

1 6. (original) The lubricant dosing apparatus according to  
2 claim 1, further comprising an electronic evaluating unit  
3 and an electrical conductor connecting said electronic  
4 sensor to said evaluating unit so as to conduct the  
5 electrical signal from said electronic sensor to said  
6 evaluating unit, and wherein said evaluating unit is  
7 adapted to evaluate the electrical signal and responsive  
8 thereto emit an evaluation signal indicative of a proper or  
9 improper functioning of said apparatus.

1 7. (original) The lubricant dosing apparatus according to  
2 claim 1, wherein said lubricant pump is a piston pump  
3 comprising a cylinder, a pneumatically actuatable piston  
4 movably arranged in said cylinder, a needle bushing having  
5 a bore therein, and a dosing needle that is movably  
6 guidedly arranged in said bore of said needle bushing and  
7 that is connected to said piston, wherein said pump inlet  
8 communicates into said bore of said needle bushing and said  
9 pump outlet communicates out of said bore of said needle  
10 bushing, and wherein said piston and said dosing needle  
11 together are adapted to repeatedly successively carry out  
12 a working stroke, and for each said working stroke a  
13 defined dosed quantity of the lubricant flows from said  
14 container through said pump inlet into said bore of said  
15 needle bushing and is injected from said bore through said  
16 pump outlet into said injection channel by said dosing  
17 needle.

1 8. (original) The lubricant dosing apparatus according to  
2 claim 7, wherein said defined dosed quantity of the  
3 lubricant is a fixed non-adjustable quantity determined by  
4 at least one of dimensions of said bore and a stroke  
5 distance of said working stroke.

1 9. (original) The lubricant dosing apparatus according to  
2 claim 1, wherein said lubricant pump is a piston pump  
3 comprising a cylinder, a pneumatically actuatable piston  
4 movably arranged in said cylinder, and a compression spring  
5 that applies a pre-stressing force to said piston so as to  
6 bias said piston toward a resting position, and wherein  
7 said piston is only moved from said resting position to a  
8 working position when compressed air, which has at least a  
9 defined pressure that is sufficient to apply to said piston  
10 an actuating force greater than and oppositely directed  
11 than said pre-stressing force, is introduced into said  
12 cylinder.

1 10. (original) The lubricant dosing apparatus according to  
2 claim 9, wherein said piston moves from said working  
3 position to said resting position due to said pre-stressing  
4 force when said defined pressure is relieved, and wherein  
5 said lubricant pump injects a dosed quantity of the  
6 lubricant from said pump outlet into said injection channel  
7 when said piston moves from said working position to said  
8 resting position.

4301/WFF:ar

- 5 -

1 11. (original) The lubricant dosing apparatus according to  
2 claim 1, further comprising a main channel including a main  
3 channel inlet and a main channel outlet, and a first  
4 pneumatic valve connected to said main channel inlet so as  
5 to selectively provide pressurized air through said main  
6 channel inlet into said main channel to form a pressurized  
7 airflow flowing through said main channel and out from said  
8 main channel outlet, and wherein said injection channel  
9 communicates into said main channel so as to introduce the  
10 lubricant from said injection channel into the pressurized  
11 airflow in said main channel.

1 12. (original) The lubricant dosing apparatus according to  
2 claim 11, further comprising a second pneumatic valve  
3 connected to said lubricant pump so as to selectively  
4 provide pressurized air to actuate said lubricant pump.

1 13. (original) The lubricant dosing apparatus according to  
2 claim 12, further comprising a single air inlet that is  
3 adapted to be connected to an external source of  
4 pressurized air, and that communicates with both said first  
5 pneumatic valve and said second pneumatic valve.

1 14. (original) The lubricant dosing apparatus according to  
2 claim 12, wherein said first pneumatic valve and said  
3 second pneumatic valve are separately actuatable  
4 independently of one another.

1 15. (original) The lubricant dosing apparatus according to  
2 claim 12, further comprising a computer controller that is  
3 connected for control signal transmission to said first  
4 pneumatic valve and to said second pneumatic valve, and  
5 that executes a control program to controlledly actuate  
6 said first pneumatic valve and said second pneumatic valve.

1 16. (original) The lubricant dosing apparatus according to  
2 claim 12, further comprising a valve monitor connected only  
3 to said first pneumatic valve and adapted to monitor a  
4 proper or improper operation of said first pneumatic valve.

1 17. (original) The lubricant dosing apparatus according to  
2 claim 1, further comprising an apparatus housing, a  
3 lubricant filling port in said housing, and a specialized  
4 lubricant fill fitting connected to said housing and  
5 communicating into said lubricant filling port, wherein  
6 said lubricant container is connected to said housing and  
7 has a fill opening communicating with said lubricant  
8 filling port.

1 18. (new) A lubricant dosing apparatus for injecting a dosed  
2 amount of a lubricant into a pressurized airflow,  
3 comprising:  
4 a lubricant container adapted to contain a lubricant  
5 therein;

6 a pneumatically actuatable lubricant pump having a  
7 pump inlet connected to said lubricant container and having  
8 a pump outlet;

9 an injection channel connected to said pump outlet;

10 a non-return valve that is interposed between said  
11 pump outlet and said injection channel and that is adapted  
12 to close said pump outlet and to selectively temporarily  
13 open said pump outlet responsive to a pressure of the  
14 lubricant to allow the lubricant to flow from said pump  
15 outlet to said injection channel;

16 an electronic sensor that is arranged adjacent to said  
17 non-return valve so as to sense at least one of a position  
18 and a stroke travel of said non-return valve, and that is  
19 adapted to emit an electrical signal responsive to and  
20 indicative of said position or said stroke travel; and

21 a removable and exchangeable annular spacer disk that  
22 is arranged circumferentially around said non-return valve,  
23 and that has a thickness which determines a basic spacing  
24 distance between said electronic sensor and said non-return  
25 valve.

1 19. (new) A lubricant dosing apparatus for injecting a dosed  
2 amount of a lubricant into a pressurized airflow,  
3 comprising:

4 a lubricant container adapted to contain a lubricant  
5 therein;

6 a pneumatically actuatable lubricant pump having a  
7 pump inlet connected to said lubricant container and having  
8 a pump outlet;

9 an injection channel connected to said pump outlet;

10 a non-return valve that is interposed between said  
11 pump outlet and said injection channel and that is adapted  
12 to close said pump outlet and to selectively temporarily  
13 open said pump outlet responsive to a pressure of the  
14 lubricant to allow the lubricant to flow from said pump  
15 outlet to said injection channel;

16 an electronic sensor that is arranged adjacent to said  
17 non-return valve so as to sense at least one of a position  
18 and a stroke travel of said non-return valve, and that is  
19 adapted to emit an electrical signal responsive to and  
20 indicative of said position or said stroke travel;

21 a main channel including a main channel inlet and a  
22 main channel outlet;

23 a first pneumatic valve connected to said main channel  
24 inlet so as to selectively provide pressurized air through  
25 said main channel inlet into said main channel to form a  
26 pressurized airflow flowing through said main channel and  
27 out from said main channel outlet;

28 a second pneumatic valve connected to said lubricant  
29 pump so as to selectively provide pressurized air to  
30 actuate said lubricant pump; and

31 a valve monitor connected only to said first pneumatic  
32 valve and adapted to monitor a proper or improper operation  
33 of said first pneumatic valve;



34 wherein said injection channel communicates into said  
35 main channel so as to introduce the lubricant from said  
36 injection channel into the pressurized airflow in said main  
37 channel

1 20. (new) The lubricant dosing apparatus according to claim 19,  
2 wherein said first pneumatic valve and said second  
3 pneumatic valve are separately actuatable independently of  
4 one another.

1 21. (new) The lubricant dosing apparatus according to claim 19,  
2 further comprising a computer controller that is connected  
3 for control signal transmission to said first pneumatic  
4 valve and to said second pneumatic valve, and that executes  
5 a control program to controlledly actuate said first  
6 pneumatic valve and said second pneumatic valve

[RESPONSE CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE]

4301/WFF:ar

- 10 -